

Collaborative editorial governance in Latin American open science through the RERCIE model

Gobernanza editorial colaborativa en la ciencia abierta latinoamericana a partir del modelo RERCIE

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Resumen

El fortalecimiento de la comunicación científica producida en contextos periféricos encuentra en la articulación de comunidades editoriales en red una vía estratégica de creciente relevancia. La presente pesquisa tuvo por objetivo analizar la génesis, la arquitectura institucional y la legitimidad democrática de la *Red de Editores y Revistas Científicas Ecuatorianas* (RERCIE) como modelo de gobernanza editorial colaborativa. Bajo un enfoque cualitativo con diseño documental, se sistematizó un corpus de fuentes institucionales, a saber, planes de trabajo, catálogos, memorias de encuentros, informes de transparencia, registros de webinars y comunicados oficiales, mediante análisis de contenido organizado en cuatro unidades: génesis institucional, ejes de gestión, gobernanza democrática y agenda temática. Los hallazgos evidencian que RERCIE, constituida en 2023 y registrada ante la autoridad gubernamental, ha articulado a 684 miembros en torno a seis comisiones disciplinares, desplegó webinars formativos y distintos catálogos, y manifestó su disposición a incidir en la política pública nacional, configurando un ecosistema de capacitación, visibilidad, indexación y toma de decisiones en el contexto nacional. En definitiva, la experiencia ecuatoriana confirma que la acción colectiva interuniversitaria propende a fortalecer la calidad, la ética y la soberanía editorial dentro del ecosistema iberoamericano de ciencia abierta.

Palabras clave: comunicación científica; gobernanza editorial; revistas científicas; acceso abierto; redes universitarias; Ecuador.

Abstract

Strengthening scholarly communication produced in peripheral contexts increasingly depends on the articulation of networked editorial communities as a strategic pathway of growing relevance. This study aimed to analyze the genesis, institutional architecture and democratic legitimacy of the Ecuadorian Network of Editors and Scientific Journals (RERCIE) as a model of collaborative editorial governance. Using a qualitative approach with a documentary design, a corpus of institutional sources was systematized, including work plans, catalogues, conference proceedings, transparency reports, webinar records and official communiqués. These materials were examined through content analysis organized into four units: institutional genesis, management axes, democratic governance and thematic agenda. The findings show that RERCIE, established in 2023 and registered with the governmental authority, has brought together 684 members across six disciplinary commissions, implemented training webinars, produced several catalogues and expressed a clear commitment to influencing national public policy. In doing so, it has configured an ecosystem of training, visibility, indexing and decision making within the national context. In conclusion, the Ecuadorian experience confirms that inter-university collective action tends to strengthen quality, ethics and editorial sovereignty within the Ibero-American open-science ecosystem.

Keywords: scholarly communication; editorial governance; scientific journals; open access; university networks; Ecuador.

Introduction

Latin American scientific communication has exhibited a trajectory of remarkable expansion over recent decades, distinguishing itself within the global landscape. The region has consolidated an open-access model sustained by the universities themselves (Fischman & Alperin, 2015), where publishing remains free of charge for both authors and readers, making it a global benchmark for bibliodiversity and for science understood as a public good. In contrast to the concentration of the global publishing market into a few large conglomerates (Larivière et al., 2015), this regional model preserves academic control over publishing. Miguel (2011) confirms the sustained advancement in the visibility of regional publications on platforms such as SciELO, RedALyC, and Scopus, while Rogel-Salazar et al. (2017) document the growing indexing of Latin American communication journals in Web of Science, Scopus, and open-access databases. This highlights the solidity of the Latin American open science infrastructure and the relevance of promoting editorial quality from within the university system itself.

In the case of Ecuador, scientific production has undergone accelerated growth, placing the country among those with the highest relative dynamism in the region. Herrera-Franco et al. (2021) document, through a bibliometric analysis, the sustained expansion of Ecuadorian research and its growing international collaboration, while Moreira-Mieles et al. (2020) characterize the consolidation of its presence in Scopus during the 2007–2017 period. This flourishing production opens up a strategic opportunity to simultaneously strengthen the network of national journals. Figure 1 summarizes the presence of Ecuadorian publications in the main indexes: all 371 titles are listed in the Latindex Catalogue 2.0, 101 (27%) meet DOAJ standards, 61 (16%) reach Redalyc, 36 (9.7%) enter SciELO Ecuador, and 11 achieve citation recognition in Scopus. This configuration, specific to the national context, outlines a ladder of editorial maturation whose higher rungs offer ample room for growth.

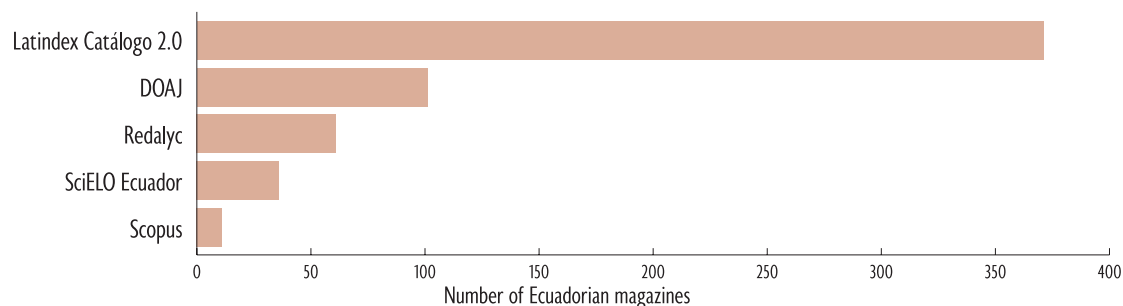


Figure 1.

Presence of Ecuadorian Scientific Journals in the Main Indexes (National Context)

Note. Based on available statistical records on Ecuadorian science. Percentages are calculated over the 371 journals in the Latindex Catalogue. These figures correspond to the national context and not to the RERCIE membership.

The transition from a basic registry to high-impact indexing benefits decisively from cooperation among editorial teams. International experience shows that journals sharing standards, training, and visibility strategies progress more rapidly than those advancing in isolation. Under this approach, the Ecuadorian ecosystem found a strategic path yet to be consolidated in the coordination of its editors—one capable of fostering stable spaces for editorial deliberation, co-publishing, and taking active part in public evaluation policies. The establishment, in 2023, of the Network of Ecuadorian Editors and Scientific Journals (*Red de Editores y Revistas Científicas Ecuatorianas*—RERCIE), registered with the then Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (Exsenescyt, currently the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education) under code REG-RED-23-0211, materializes precisely this path by establishing a pioneering mechanism for interuniversity collective action in the country.

To understand the scope of this experience, the present study is structured around four research questions. RQ1: Under what institutional and regulatory conditions does a university network of editors emerge and structure itself within the Ecuadorian scientific context? RQ2: What management pillars and what repertoire of actions does RERCIE deploy regarding training, visibility, and indexing? RQ3: What governance mechanisms and democratic legitimization processes sustain the continuity of its collegiate leadership, including its influence on public policy? RQ4: What thematic agenda does the network agree upon regarding contemporary dilemmas in scientific publishing, namely ethics, artificial intelligence, and open access?

Based on this research, three core dimensions emerge that specify its innovative nature. First, the study documents and conceptualizes, for the first time in specialized literature, the trajectory of a national network of editors in Ecuador, enriching the empirical body of knowledge on Andean scientific communication. Second, it proposes an interpretation of RERCIE as a collaborative governance mechanism for knowledge commons, which provides a fertile analytical framework for understanding editorial collective action. Third, it provides evidence of a process of democratic legitimization—the open consultation for leadership ratification—and its application toward public evaluation policy, which constitutes a unique participatory governance practice among editorial networks in the region. In sum, this study contributes both to localized knowledge on Ecuadorian scientific publishing and to the Ibero-American debate on strategies to strengthen regional science.

Theoretical Framework

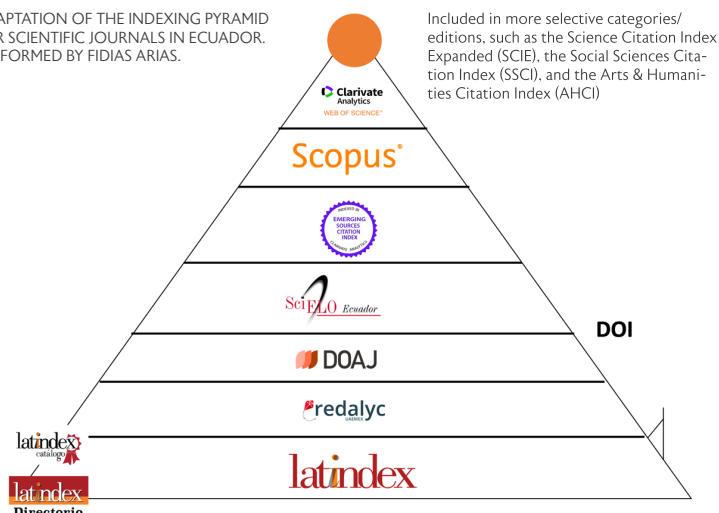
The Editorial Context of Ecuadorian and Latin American Science

Editorial management constitutes a transversal and complex field that coordinates the planning, organization, and control of the production, certification, and dissemination of knowledge (Aparicio et al., 2016). From a historical perspective, Darnton (2009) reminds us that books and scientific publishing have played a central role in cultural and social configuration—a dimension that digitalization and open access have deeply redefined. In Latin America, this field crystallized into a scientific communication ecosystem that is predominantly Diamond, sustained by universities and cooperative platforms that guarantee that publishing remains free of charge for both authors and readers. Sánchez-Pita et al. (2025) underline that this framework favors the democratization of knowledge and the thematic specialization of journals, while the Latin American Association of Scientific Editors (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Editores Científicos*—ALAE, 2021) links it to an agenda of bibliodiversity, multilingualism, and the responsible use of metrics.

Editorial maturation is organized as a progression that starts with a national registry in Latindex and ascends toward the standards of certified open access and international citation recognition, in accordance with the indexing pyramid adapted for Latin America by Torres-Toukoumidis (2024) from the proposal by Arias (2022), which is presented in Figure 2. Each step of this ladder—from the Latindex Directory and Catalogue to Web of Science, passing through Redalyc, DOAJ, SciELO, and Scopus—requires specific technical capabilities. This makes cooperation among editors and sustained institutional backing especially valuable (Briones et al., 2021).

Within this framework, indexing operates as a mechanism of legitimization that guides the professionalization of journals. It is advisable, however, to weigh quality in a broad sense, encompassing both methodological rigor and the social relevance of knowledge. In contrast to a regime centered on excellence understood as mere competition (Vessuri et al., 2014), science produced in the periphery reclaims its own circuits of legitimization and evaluation (Beigel, 2014). Hence the relevance of responsible metrics, in line with the principles of the Leiden Manifesto (Hicks et al., 2015) and information policies that value the social worth of publishing (Aguillo, 2014), as well as a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of open access (Tennant et al., 2016). Along these lines, Sánchez-Pita et al. (2025) recommend strengthening institutional support for diamond journals, boosting their visibility, and clearly articulating their ethical commitments—recommendations that are fully congruent with the purposes of a national network of editors.

ADAPTATION OF THE INDEXING PYRAMID
FOR SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS IN ECUADOR.
PERFORMED BY FIDIAS ARIAS.



Included in more selective categories/
editions, such as the Science Citation Index
Expanded (SCIE), the Social Sciences Cita-
tion Index (SSCI), and the Arts & Humani-
ties Citation Index (AHCI)

and the Colombian Scientific Information Network (*Red Colombiana de Información Científica*, 2025), established in 2019 by Colombia's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation to coordinate the visibility and management of the country's scientific information. On a regional scale, the Latin American Association of Scientific Editors (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Editores Científicos*—ALAE, 2021) brought the editorial community together around a common declaration on the responsible evaluation of science, while the Association of University Presses of Latin America and the Caribbean (*Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias de América Latina y el Caribe*—EULAC, 2024), founded in 1987, groups national networks of university publishers in favor of bibliodiversity and multilingualism. Latindex, for its part, constitutes a cooperative network of institutions that, since 1995, has linked multiple countries around common criteria for editorial

quality. These networks and associations are distinct from platforms like SciELO or Redalyc, which operate as infrastructures for visibility and open access rather than as editors' guilds. The connection between them, described by Aparicio et al. (2016), confirms that cooperation enhances quality, visibility, and editorial sovereignty.

The sustainability of these arrangements rests upon three converging conditions: the legitimacy of their leadership, the density of participation, and the network's capacity to translate consensus into tangible public goods. Hence, the examination of a recent national experience, such as that of RERCIE, is highly suitable for assessing how these conditions materialize in an editorial context undergoing full consolidation.

Methodology

The general objective of this research was to analyze the genesis, institutional architecture, and democratic legitimacy of the Network of Ecuadorian Editors and Scientific Journals (*Red de Editores y Revistas Científicas Ecuatorianas*) as a model of collaborative editorial governance. Its specific objectives were: [1] to reconstruct the institutional and regulatory conditions that fostered the creation and structuring of the network; [2] to systematize the management pillars and the repertoire of actions deployed regarding training, visibility, and indexing; and [3] to examine the governance mechanisms and democratic legitimization processes that sustain the continuity of its collegiate leadership and its influence on public policy, along with the thematic agenda agreed upon regarding contemporary dilemmas in scientific publishing.

Figura 2.

Pirámide de indexación para revistas científicas en Ecuador

Nota. Adaptación de la pirámide de indexación para revistas científicas en Ecuador elaborada por Torres-Toukourmidis (2024) a partir de la propuesta de Arias (2022) para Latinoamérica. Tomado de la Red de Editores y Revistas Científicas Ecuatorianas (RERCIE).

University Networks and Collaborative Editorial Governance: Conceptualization and Success Stories

University networks of editors can be conceived as instances of collaborative governance that cooperatively manage knowledge commons. From this perspective, scientific knowledge and the infrastructure that certifies and disseminates it are managed as a shared heritage rather than as individually appropriable commodities (Cueva-Estrada et al., 2025). Narváez-Bertheleot et al. (1992) had already demonstrated the value of scientific collaboration in Latin America and the convenience of systems that coordinate regional actors (Aparicio et al., 2016). Within this framework, editorial networks internalize functions that are usually scattered—namely, capacity building, harmonization of standards, professional representation before scientific policy bodies, and regulatory advocacy—thereby generating social capital and reducing the costs of interinstitutional cooperation.

The region offers success stories that validate the relevance of this model, provided that a distinction is made between editors' associations and indexing platforms. In terms of professional representation, the Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors (*Associação Brasileira de Editores Científicos*—ABEC) has illustrated, since 1985, the maturity of a national association of editors capable of professionalizing the craft, establishing best practices, and representing the collective body. Recent national experiences follow this same path, such as the Bolivian Network of Editors and Scientific Journals (*Red Boliviana de Editores y Revistas Científicas*, 2025), which brings together those responsible for journals linked to higher education institutions in Bolivia,

To achieve these objectives, the study adopted a qualitative approach with a documentary research design. This choice is grounded in the relevance of documentary analysis for reconstructing institutional trajectories from primary, official sources, which provide a reliable and traceable record of the network's decisions, activities, and outcomes. Furthermore, the documentary design proved ideal for addressing a contemporary and delimited phenomenon whose understanding relies, to a large extent, on the evidence generated by the organization itself.

Data collection tools encompassed the complete set of documents produced and disseminated by RERCIE between 2023 and 2026. Specifically, the study utilized institutional spreadsheets regarding membership and journal indexing; the official website and its news repository; the network's books and catalogues—namely, Catalogue Volume I (Cárdenas-Tapia et al., 2024) and Catalogue Volume II (Cárdenas-Tapia, 2025); the proceedings of the II RERCIE Meeting 2024 edited by Abya-Yala (Cárdenas-Tapia et al., 2025); the institutional playlist gathering the recordings of webinars and meetings (RERCIE, 2026); the 2025 transparency report; and official communiqués from the board of directors, including the statement on the SCLmago Journal Rank (RERCIE, 2025) and the communication addressed to the Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (*Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior*—CACES, 2019). The catalogues were also consulted through their records in the institutional academic repository and the regional aggregator domain, which allowed for the cross-checking of their bibliographical data.

The procedure was executed through a documentary analysis conducted between February and May 2026. Each source was evaluated according to four classic criteria for documentary quality—namely, authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning—and subsequently coded into four units of analysis derived from the research questions: (i) genesis and institutional architecture; (ii) management pillars and production; (iii) democratic governance, legitimacy, and public policy advocacy; and (iv) consensus-based thematic agenda. Triangulation among the distinct sources allowed for the contrasting and corroborating of information, while available quantitative data—such as membership figures, the number of webinars and meetings, catalogued journals, and the results of the consultations conducted—were integrated descriptively to measure the scope of the analyzed actions.

Results

Genesis and Institutional Architecture of the Network

The findings demonstrate that the creation of RERCIE resulted from the convergence of academic and state actors around a shared purpose. The I National Meeting of Scientific Journal Editors, held in June 2023 under the joint leadership of the then Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (Exsenescyt, currently the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education), the *Universidad Politécnica Salesiana*, SciELO-Ecuador, FLACSO-Ecuador, and the *Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo*, operated as the founding event. Its formalization was sanctioned through its registration with Exsenescyt under code REG-RED-23-0211, which granted it an institutional status recognized by the highest authority of national scientific policy.

The organizational architecture of the network is built upon a tripartite collegiate leadership, headed by the *Universidad Politécnica Salesiana* in the presidency, FLACSO-Ecuador in the vice-presidency, and the *Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo* in the secretariat, accompanied by Exsenescyt and a constellation of area coordinators. A distinctive feature of its model lies in the fact that affiliation carries no cost for members: the collegiate leadership, signed by rectors, vice-rectors, or deans, assumes institutional management, public relations, and the financial sustainability of the network, while their delegates in the presidency, vice-presidency, and secretariat operate as the executive and operational component of the organization. This division of roles—between the institutional backing of the highest authorities and the day-to-day management of their delegates—endows the network with financial stability and interlocation capacity.

The work plan also prescribed the creation of six thematic commissions—namely, Health Sciences, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Multidisciplinary, Engineering and Exact Sciences, and Arts and Humanities—in recognition of the fact that each field of knowledge possesses its own specificities. The organizational chart, conceived under a circular and interactive logic, places three guiding pillars at its core: visibility, indexing, and training, around which the disciplinary nodes gravitate. Regarding its size, the network experienced sustained growth. As illustrated in Figure 3, membership scaled from approximately 250 members in October 2024 to 684 members recorded in 2025, consolidating it as the largest scientific publishing community in the country and confirming its convening power.

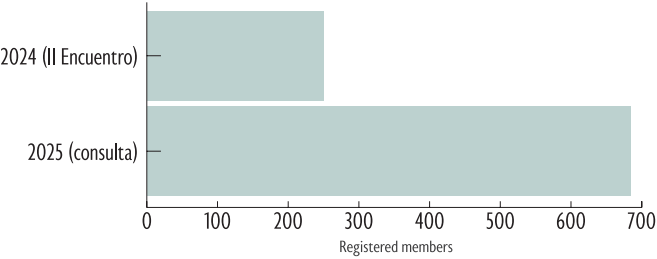


Figure 3.
RERCIE Membership Growth (2024–2025)
Note. Based on the proceedings of the II RERCIE Meeting 2024 and the network’s membership records.

Table 1 recapitulates the main structural indicators of the network, which measure its institutional deployment during the period under examination.

Table 1.
Structural Indicators of RERCIE (2023–2025)

Indicator	Detail
Year of establishment	2023 (1st National Publishers' Conference)
Registration with Exsenescyt (now the Vice Ministry of Higher Education)	REG-RED-23-0211
Professional association leadership	UPS (chair), FLACSO (vice chair), UNACH (secretary)
Disciplinary committees	6 fields of study
Network members	684
Annual national meetings	3 editions (2023–2025)*
Publishers consulted (proposal to CACES)	In progress 2026

Note. Based on RERCIE institutional documents (work plan, 2025 transparency report, catalogues, 2025–2027 board communiqué, and communication addressed to CACES)

The repertoire of actions deployed by RERCIE is organized around the goals formalized in its work plan, which include increasing the number of journals indexed in international databases by 10% within a two-year period, conducting at least three training sessions annually, enhancing visibility across social networks, and endorsing a reviewer certification process in 90% of the affiliated publications. Table 2 synthesizes these strategic objectives.

Table 2.
Strategic Objectives of the RERCIE Work Plan

N.º	Objective
1	Increase the number of journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science (ESCI/Core Collection), or PubMed by 10% over the next two years.
2	Conduct at least three training sessions per year for editors of Ecuadorian scientific journals.
3	Increase the visibility of journals on the network’s social media platforms through regular posts and alternative metrics.
4	Implement a reviewer certification endorsed by RERCIE in 90% of affiliated journals.

Note. Based on the RERCIE 2023–2025 work plan.

In the pillar of training, the network deployed intense, continuous educational activity. While the 2025 transparency report documented thirteen webinars within one of its reporting windows, the program extends from 2023 to 2026, meaning the institutional playlist compiles around forty sessions with free access to their recordings (RERCIE, 2026). Figure 4 synthesizes their thematic distribution and demonstrates that the training agenda comfortably exceeds artificial intelligence. In fact, the largest cluster corresponds to indexing and databases, featuring talks on Latindex, DOAJ, Redalyc-AmeliCA, LILACS, DIALNET, Biblat, and the

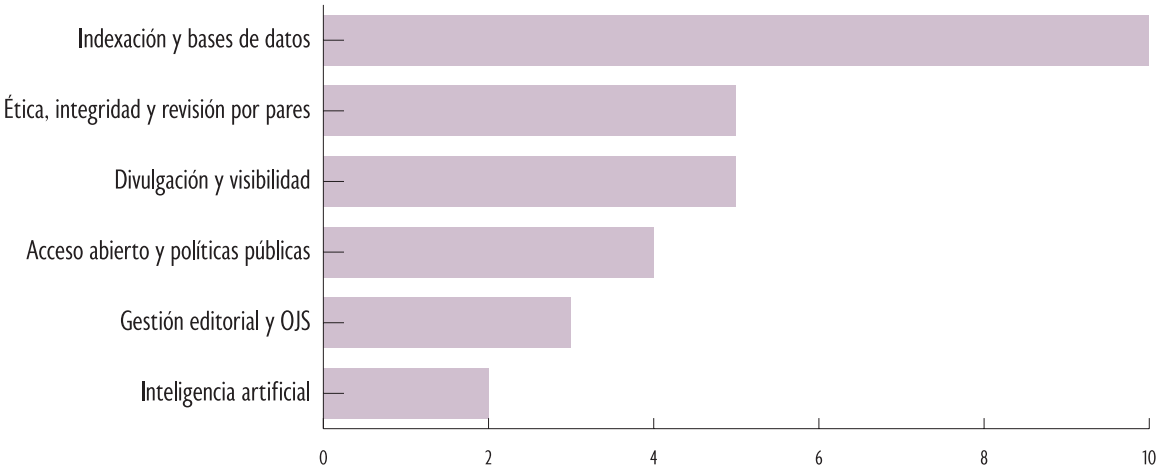


Figure 4.
Thematic Distribution of the RERCIE Webinar Program (2023–2026)
Note. Own classification based on the RERCIE institutional playlist (2026), which compiles around forty sessions including talks and recordings of meetings. The figure groups the educational talks according to their predominant thematic pillar.

SCImago Journal Rank, as well as metadata management through DOI, SciELO's XML-JATS, and Crossmark. This is followed by ethics, integrity, and peer review; dissemination and visibility; open access and public policies; editorial management in Open Journal Systems, with sessions dedicated to its recent versions and tools; and, to a lesser extent, artificial intelligence. These talks brought together prominent international speakers, including Andreu Casero-Ripollés from the Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, focusing on peer review, and Piotr Trzesniak, associated with ALAEC, discussing scientific journals in times of open science and predatory publications.

Annual national meetings, designed as recurring formatting and networking events, complement this continuous training. By 2025, three editions had been held, bringing together editors from across the country for lectures by international speakers and technical discussion panels organized by fields of knowledge. The I Meeting (2023) operated as the founding event. The II Meeting (2024), under the slogan Publishing with a Purpose, Science with an Impact, gathered more than two hundred editors and featured key figures such as the DOAJ ambassador for Latin America, the Latindex coordinator for Costa Rica, and a Clarivate specialist for Web of Science, alongside sessions on SciELO and Scopus. The III Meeting (2025) continued this tradition with keynote lectures on quality evaluation, editorial management in Open Journal Systems, ethics in editorial management, open access in DOAJ, and the applications of artificial intelligence in editorial processes. The technical panels, organized by areas, became a deliberative mechanism that directly informs the network's thematic agenda.

In the visibility pillar, RERCIE intensified its presence on its official social media platforms—Facebook, X, and LinkedIn—disseminating more than fifty posts that garnered around 2,500 followers, reaching 32,256 impressions and a cumulative reach of 19,368. Additionally, the network consolidated its greatest editorial achievement with the publication of Catalogue Volume I, which groups 82 open-access journals distributed across six thematic areas, followed by a second volume in 2025. This catalogue represents a concrete tool for aggregating and projecting national production.

In the indexing pillar, the network aligns its efforts toward narrowing the gap between the national registry and a presence in high-impact databases, in harmony with the maturation pyramid described in the theoretical framework. Its training program, catalogue, and technical support operate together as levers aimed at progressively elevating the positioning of affiliated journals within the indexing system—which already includes titles firmly established in Scopus such as Íconos, Sophia, and Retos. This orientation is accompanied by a qualitative interpretation of metrics: through its communiqué on the SCImago Journal Rank, RERCIE assessed that the ten Ecuadorian journals present

in the 2025 SJR constitute a significant achievement for the region. It proposed interpreting editorial growth not merely as quantitative impact, but as an expansion of capacities that includes the strengthening of teams, the professionalization of processes, and the consolidation of academic networks, marking a transitional phase from visibility to consolidation (RERCIE, 2025).

Democratic Governance and Legitimacy of the Collegiate Leadership

One of the most distinctive features of RERCIE lies in its mechanism for democratic legitimization. Before extending the mandate of its board of directors, the network submitted the ratification of the current leadership to a vote. This was conducted through a survey administered between May 18 and June 18, 2025, aimed at 335 editors and 275 scientific journals within a total membership of 684 individuals. As shown in Figure 5, the results achieved an 85% approval rating, sanctioning the continuity of the board for the July 2025–July 2027 period, which comprises the *Universidad Politécnica Salesiana* in the presidency, FLACSO in the vice-presidency, and the *Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo* in the secretariat.

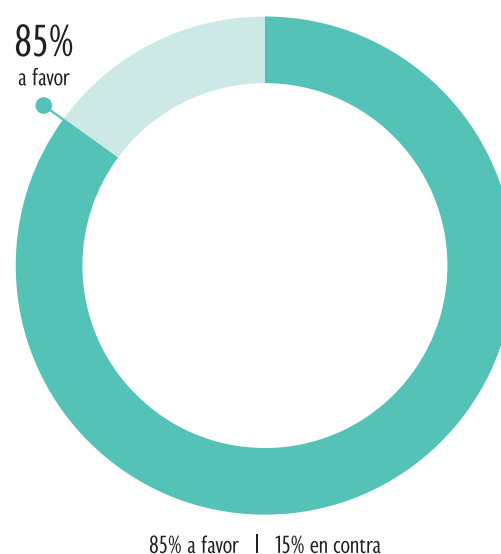


Figure 5.

Results of the Board Ratification Vote (2025).

Note. Based on the official communiqué from the RERCIE 2025–2027 board of directors. The vote was conducted between May 18 and June 18, 2025.

This procedure warrants distinction because it introduces a participatory governance practice that enriches the customary practices of regional editorial networks. By subjecting the continuity of its leadership to the express will of its members, RERCIE embodies the principles of legitimized self-governance inherent to the collaborative management of knowledge commons. Furthermore, the breadth

of the consensus achieved reinforces the internal cohesion of the network and the authority of its board to represent the collective body before scientific policy agencies. Transparency complements this model, as the network publicly accounts for its webinars, dissemination reach, and vote results, shaping an exercise in probity that strengthens the trust of its members.

Advocacy in Public Policy for Higher Education Evaluation

The participatory legitimacy of RERCIE extends beyond its internal governance and reaches the sphere of public policy. In December 2025, the network submitted a proposal to the Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (*Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior—CACES*) aimed at strengthening the evaluation model for higher education institutions through the explicit recognition of editorial governance. To substantiate it, RERCIE designed and validated six statements, which were piloted with a 10% sample, and gathered 71 responses from editors of Ecuadorian scientific journals—a number considered sufficient to anchor the proposal.

The analysis of the averages obtained across five dimensions—relevance, objectivity, doctoral relevance, ease of application, and institutional strengthening—identified that the statement concerning the existence of a formally constituted university editorial committee or council, approved by the senior collegiate body, achieved the highest and most consistent values. On this basis, the network proposed incorporating this criterion into the evaluation model through a binary verification of formal existence, verifiable operation via minutes and editorial decisions, and documentary traceability supported by dated, signed, and archived evidence.

The intended effect of this institutional advocacy is to modify public policy within the higher education evaluation model, ensuring that the establishment and operation of university editorial committees are incorporated as a criterion that strengthens the academic and institutional qualification of universities. This initiative, endorsed by the network's presidency, demonstrates that RERCIE transcends internal self-management to establish itself as an actor with regulatory advocacy capacity, constituting an advanced manifestation of the collaborative governance of knowledge commons.

Consensus-Based Thematic Agenda Facing the Dilemmas of Scientific Publishing

The analysis of the proceedings from the meetings, the transparency reports, and the webinar program allows for the reconstruction of the thematic agenda agreed upon

by the network. This program, articulated across approximately forty sessions, maps out the collective concerns around several axes: indexing and databases (Latindex, DOAJ, Redalyc-AmeliCA, SciELO with XML-JATS, DIALNET, Biblat, Crossmark, and the DOI), editorial management in Open Journal Systems, integrity and peer review, dissemination through comics and podcasts, responsible metrics, and, cross-cuttingly, artificial intelligence. Upon this broad foundation, three core pillars concentrate the network's deliberation.

Regarding publishing ethics, editors converged on the advisability of strengthening preventive ethical training from the earliest years of university education, as well as the relevance of universities and journals implementing ethics committees with effective powers, audits, and clear retraction policies, so that scientific integrity is cultivated proactively. This consensus was informed by talks on reviewer and author expectations, misconceptions regarding publishing, Creative Commons licenses, and the identification of predatory journals—a phenomenon whose global expansion has been documented in detail (Shen & Björk, 2015).

The network's stance on artificial intelligence constitutes one of the most sophisticated consensus on its agenda, nurtured by a sequence of talks dedicated to AI applications in editorial process management, best practices in AI and statistics, and AI literacy for scientific journals. RERCIE conceives AI not as a threat to be outlawed, but as a strategic ally for tasks such as the detection of redundancies and similarities, literature review, and data analysis. This recognition is accompanied, however, by a principle of responsibility: the network promotes that any use of AI must be explicitly declared in manuscripts, specifying the phase of the process in which it was utilized, with the purpose of safeguarding authorship, originality, and transparency, in line with reflections on the role of editors facing generative artificial intelligence in Hispano-America (Buitrago Ciro & Franco Rico, 2025). In this way, the network prevents the risk of automation diluting intellectual responsibility while simultaneously driving progress toward a common regulatory framework for the use of artificial intelligence in affiliated journals, congruent with best editorial practices that champion the traceability of every decision.

Finally, concerning open access and indexing, participants valued the diamond model as a pathway for democratizing knowledge and explored sustainability alternatives, such as interuniversity consortia to fund publications and the reorientation of editorial policies toward social and methodological relevance. In short, the RERCIE agenda denotes a critical and situated understanding of contemporary dilemmas in scientific publishing, fully aligned with the recommendations of Sánchez-Pita et al. (2025) on strengthening diamond journals.

Discussion

The findings presented confirm that the trajectory of RERCIE can be interpreted as a successful case of collaborative governance of knowledge commons. The network established clear membership boundaries, rules for participation, a leadership structure legitimized through consultation, and accountability mechanisms—features that the literature consistently associates with sustainable institutional arrangements and that Narváez-Berthelemot et al. (1992) anticipated when weighing the value of regional scientific collaboration. Within this context, the Ecuadorian experience engages in a direct dialogue with established reference points in the region and draws strength from the cooperative infrastructure built by Latindex, SciELO, Redalyc, and AmeliCA.

In particular, the RERCIE agenda converges with the platform promoted by the Latin American Association of Scientific Editors (ALAE, 2021), which advocates for the responsible use of metrics, multilingualism, bibliodiversity, and the protection of regional open science infrastructure. This convergence becomes tangible both in the network's own programming—which featured international speakers linked to this movement—and in its communiqué on the SCImago Journal Rank, which urges a reading of metrics as a process of maturation rather than a linear verdict (RERCIE, 2025). This aligns with studies that warn against the limitations of Scopus as a sole source of indicators (Rozemblum et al., 2021). The Ecuadorian experience is thus part of an expanding regional ecosystem, alongside associations and networks such as ABEC, REBER, RedCol, and EULAC, demonstrating that RERCIE actively participates in the Ibero-American debate on scientific evaluation with social relevance. In line with Sánchez-Pita et al. (2025), the network privileges a notion of quality that harmonizes methodological rigor with social relevance, rather than confining itself to mere citation metrics.

The proposal submitted to CACES bestows a unique feature upon the Ecuadorian experience within the regional landscape, as it moves editorial collective action into the realm of public policy. While numerous networks concentrate their efforts on training and visibility, RERCIE aims to reconfigure the very criteria by which the state evaluates universities, positioning editorial governance as an indicator of institutional quality. The data on Ecuadorian editorial maturation described by Herrera-Franco et al. (2021) thus acquire a proactive purpose: the gap between the national registry and high-impact indexing is reinterpreted as a growth horizon upon which interuniversity cooperation and regulatory advocacy can decisively act. The breadth of support for the board's ratification, nearing unanimity, reinforces the cohesion of the collective body; nevertheless, it remains advisable to preserve spaces for internal critical deliberation to enrich the network's plurality as it expands.

Conclusions

The present inquiry analyzed the genesis, institutional architecture, and democratic legitimacy of the Network of Ecuadorian Editors and Scientific Journals (*Red de Editores y Revistas Científicas Ecuatorianas*) as a model of collaborative editorial governance. Among the most relevant findings, it is worth noting that RERCIE emerged in 2023 from the confluence of academia and the state, was formalized through its registration with Exsencyt (currently the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education), and was structured under a tripartite collegiate leadership. This structure is sustained at no cost to its members, wherein senior authorities provide institutional backing and their delegates handle operational management.

Equally outstanding is the deployment of an articulated repertoire of actions: in training, with thirteen webinars and three annual national meetings of international scope; in visibility, with an intensified digital presence and a catalogue of 82 journals; and in indexing, aimed at progressively elevating the positioning of affiliated publications. Finally, the study highlights the establishment of a democratic legitimization practice that is unique in the region—an open ratification vote supported by 85% of those consulted—alongside a public policy advocacy proposal for higher education evaluation and a critical thematic agenda centered on preventive ethics, the responsible use of artificial intelligence, and the sustainability of open access.

This research acknowledges certain limitations that should be made explicit. The analysis relied predominantly on institutional documentary sources; supplementing these with interviews with editors and external perspectives would enrich future triangulations. Likewise, the synchronic nature of the study makes it advisable to cautiously ponder the long-term sustainability of these achievements. Furthermore, its condition as a single case study directs its findings toward analytical transferability rather than statistical generalization.

Looking ahead, it is recommended that researchers undertake longitudinal studies to evaluate the actual impact of RERCIE on the indexing and quality of affiliated journals, as well as comparative research contrasting the Ecuadorian experience with that of other national networks in the Andean and Ibero-American regions. Additionally, it is suggested to analyze the itinerary of the proposal submitted to CACES and its effects on the evaluation model, and to incorporate in-depth qualitative approaches that capture the perceptions of the editors themselves regarding the network's governance. In short, the consolidation of self-governed editorial communities with public policy advocacy capacity emerges as a promising horizon of research and action to enhance the science produced in the region.

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